



*An in-depth study of what **God** has
revealed about Himself in Scripture*

A discipleship ministry of
True Life Church

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THE PURSUIT of God

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A few months ago, the people of our church decided to make a new commitment to the call of God on our existence and to re-examine our purpose for existence. We understand that if a church is making no impact on its community and the world for the kingdom of God, then we have probably lost our focus.

As a result, we renamed our fellowship “**True Life Church – A Southern Baptist Fellowship**.” We changed the church sign, changed letterhead and email addresses, created a webpage and a Facebook page, wrote a constitution and by-laws.

While working on the webpage, I reviewed our statement of faith, and was moved to prepare a series of sermons on the subject of what we believe.

This study tonight – the “**Pursuit of God**” – originated from the preparation for the first part of that series. It is a study of the truth concerning the person and the nature of God – a study of what God has revealed about Himself.

After the initial introductory opening, I have made an effort to limit my commentary and have included a large amount of Scripture, because the goal is to understand what “thus saith the Lord,” not what we imagine about God.

You have probably heard people say, “I don’t care anything about studying theology. All I want to do is study the Bible.”

What people who make such comments fail to comprehend is the purpose of God in giving us the Bible.

Importance of Theology

Theology is a compound word made up of *theo-*, which means God, and *-ology*, which means “the study of.” Therefore, theology is the study of God.

Theology is not a philosophical study or a discussion of theories about what might be. Theology is the study of God’s essence – who He is in his person and nature – as well as God’s attributes – how He manifests himself and interacts with His creation.

Even though we have had the canon of Scripture available to us for almost 2000 years, there are still many people – many of them church members – who have little or no concept of what the Bible actually teaches about God.

A.W. Tozer

It is my opinion that the Christian conception of God current in these middle years of the twentieth century is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God

and actually to constitute for professed believers something amounting to a moral calamity.

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us...Man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshipper entertains high or low thoughts of God.

To say that we believe in God without having a biblical basis for our beliefs is basically a form of idolatry, because, without the biblical basis, we are worshipping a god that is a creation of our own imagination.

A.W. Tozer continues...

Among the sins to which the human heart is prone, hardly any other is more hateful to God than idolatry, for idolatry is at bottom a libel on His character. The idolatrous heart assumes that God is other than He is....

Let us beware lest we in our pride accept the erroneous notion that idolatry consists only in kneeling before visible objects of adoration, and that civilized peoples are therefore free from it.

The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.

I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God.

In John 17:3, Jesus said, "...this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

Man's Rejection of God

The reality is that we can never know God in all of His fullness. All that we know about God is limited to what He has revealed about Himself.

But even that is too much for most men to know or at least to care about knowing – even for Christians. We had rather protect our comfortable images of God than investigate and learn about a God who may challenge our basic beliefs about life and eternity. And we reject any concept of God that threatens man's ability to determine his own destiny.

I am sure you've heard the story of the little boy in class who was working arduously on his drawing assignment. When the teacher asked what it was that he was working so hard to draw, he replied, "A picture of God."

The teacher corrected him by saying, "Son, you can't draw a picture of God. No one knows what God looks like."

The little boy assured her by answering, “When I get finished they will.”

Paul called attention to such a philosophy in his letter to the church at Rome.

Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools... 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts... 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

Robert W. Lancaster, *The Fools of the Bible...*

...tells of a Chinese man who traveled to England and discovered a beautiful microscope which he purchased and took back to China. One of the first things he looked at through the microscope was a grain of rice. He was shocked to discover that there were tiny organisms living in the grain of rice. Stressed over his discovery, he did the only thing he could think of to solve the issue – he destroyed the microscope.

Mankind, faced with the knowledge of a God who demands accountability of His creation and who holds out the prospect of certain judgment at the end of time, did the only thing he could do to solve the problem – he rejected God.

I read an article recently that told how Brad Pitt had abandoned Christianity because he had “not found solace in traditional religion...” His parents are described as conservative Southern Baptists and his younger brother, Doug, is a pastor in a large church outside of Springfield, MO.

Brad Pitt:

When I got untethered from the comfort of religion, it wasn't a loss of faith for me, it was a discovery of self. I had faith that I'm capable enough to handle any situation. There's peace in understanding that I have only one life, here and now, and I'm responsible.

So man, unwilling to be bound to a God who threatens his control of his own personal free will and self-determination, is “untethered” and free to face this world as he chooses. The major problem with that is that he is not free to face what comes after this world as he chooses.

One of the most misapplied texts in the Bible is...

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish...

It has been used over and over again to encourage individuals and organizations – including Christian organizations and missions groups – to get a vision for what God has called them to do – that without a vision, they will not be successful.

But the verse has nothing to do with creating a vision or objective for some project or even for one's life.

The verse is best translated to say, “Where there is no knowledge of God (Amp. “no redemptive revelation of God), the people cast off all restraint (literally “get naked”).”

Correct knowledge and understanding of God is critical to man’s success in the creation – critical to our understanding our purpose on the earth.

The Chief End of Man

The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks...

Question 1: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

1 Cor. 10:31 Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (See also Ps. 86:9; Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 6:20; Rev. 4:11)

Psalms 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. (See also Ps. 16:5-11; 144:15; Isa. 12:2; Luke 2:10; Phil. 4:4; Rev. 21:3-4)

The knowledge and understanding of the person and attributes and purposes of God are fundamental to all other knowledge and truth.

Job 11:7 (Zophar, advisor of Job) Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? 8 It is higher than heaven – what can you do? Deeper than Sheol – what can you know? 9 Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.

Isaiah 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

Rom. 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

From such scriptures, it would seem, then, that man can never come to an understanding of the things of God. So what are we to do if we would know Him?

Yet even though we cannot comprehend God in all of His majesty and glory, we can know Him personally and truthfully.

God’s Revelation of Himself

God knew that man could never come to where He is or comprehend with his limited abilities the infinite capacities and attributes of an infinite God.

So He did what any loving God would do – He revealed himself to His creation – first through general revelation in the creation itself, then by special revelation in the person of the Son, Jesus Christ, and in His written word, the Bible.

If we would know God experientially and personally, we must come to know Him through His personal revelation, the Son, Jesus Christ.

If we would know God intellectually, we must come to know about Him through His written revelation, the Bible.

If we would know God spiritually and as fully as the revelation will allow, we must depend on the filling and the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 2:10 These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 16 "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ."

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PART 2: CONCEPTS of God

The Existence of God

Earlier this year, I had two encounters that represent the typical responses of people when it comes to the subject of God and Christianity.

1. Apathy
2. Ignorance

In the first instance, I received a phone call from a woman seeking benevolence. She came to the church to pick up and fill out an application requesting help paying her utility bill.

Before she left, I asked her if she attended a church. Her response was something like, “No, I haven’t been able to find a church yet.”

I learned from talking to this lady that she and her family – there are seven people living in the household – live within half of a mile of two fairly large churches and not much farther from two other smaller churches. She could not find the time to attend any of these churches, yet when it came to asking for a handout, she did not hesitate to travel all the way across town to seek help from a church.

The family did not have enough money to pay for utilities, although according to her application, they are spending \$250 per month on Comcast cable, phone, and internet. The family (all adults) seems to be quite concerned about the entertainment opportunities of the world while remaining apathetic towards a relationship with God, their Creator and ultimately their Judge.

In the second case, my computer malfunctioned. On the fourth call to technical support, I confirmed that the agent, a girl who identified herself as Michelle, was located in Manila, Philippines, as the others had been.

Of course, there is a good bit of dead time in the process of analyzing and repairing. During one of those lulls, I asked Michelle about her relationship with Jesus Christ.

She responded that she is a Christian. Then she asked me if I was a believer? When I answered yes, she asked if I was a Christian or a Catholic.

I was intrigued by her question and, as she seemed willing to share, I took advantage of her curiosity to witness as much as a phone connection and the circumstances of our call would allow.

Michelle admitted that she had a Bible but had never read it. She seemed to be basically ignorant of anything the Bible had to say or even of its arrangement, so I did the best I could to summarize the creation, the Fall of man, and God's plan of redemption.

She seemed to be genuinely interested in everything I had to say. We did not come to a point of decision during the conversation – at least as far as was verbalized – but she did agree to open her Bible when she got the chance and to begin reading the gospel of John.

Will Durant, a well-known historian and philosopher, said that the greatest question of our time is, "Can man live without God?"

Ravi Zacharias wrote a book that bears that question as its title in which he sought to answer two questions:

1. Does God exist?
2. If God exists, what is His character or nature?

One thing we as Christians need to realize is that all that other religions believe is not wrong. All religions contain some element of truth. Most contain excellent teachings and call for a high moral character among their adherents.

However, all religions cannot be correct on all subjects, and when we discover a subject or belief on which other religions and Christianity disagree, we need to stand firmly on the point that only Christianity is true.

There can only be one correct answer to the questions of righteousness. And there can only be one answer to the question concerning the existence of God. Either He exists or He does not.

Beliefs Concerning God's Existence

The beliefs concerning the existence of God form the first great division among men concerning religion. When the existence of God is considered, there are three major belief systems:

1. Atheism

A=not, theist=God. So the word atheist means "no God."

Etienne Borne:

Atheism is the deliberate, definite, dogmatic denial of the existence of God. It is not satisfied with appropriate truth or relative truth, but claims to see the ins and outs of the game quite clearly being the absolute denial of the absolute.

Ravi Zacharias:

Atheism is not merely a passive unbelief in God but an assertive denial of the major claims of all varieties of theism; atheism contradicts belief in God with a positive affirmation of matter as ultimate reality.

I read this description of atheism:

Atheism is the belief that there was nothing and nothing happened to nothing and then nothing magically exploded for no reason, creating everything. And then a bunch of everything magically rearranged itself for no reason whatsoever into self-replicating bits which then turned into dinosaurs.

To someone, all of that makes perfect sense.

Atheism may be...

- dogmatic (one who openly declares that they do not believe in any form of god).
- practical (characterized by an apathy towards God as with the lady seeking benevolence)

2. Agnosticism

The word “agnostic” means “without knowledge.” The agnostic does not declare that God does not exist – a position that cannot be proven any more than the existence of God – but says that there is not enough empirical evidence to make a determination if God exists or not.

There is not enough knowledge to make a decision about the existence of God. In other words, God is not only unknown, but unknowable.

Typically, the result is the same as that of atheism in that the agnostic refuses to acknowledge the existence of God and thus the lordship of Christ.

3. Theism

This group includes everyone else – in other words, those who acknowledge the presence of a Supreme Being of some sort.

This category can be further subdivided into several groups:

- **Dualism**

There are two equal forces in the Universe – Good and Evil – vying for control. Only one will eventually win, but the outcome is anything but certain.

According to Henry Theissen, dualism believes that Good and Evil – typically referred to as God and Satan...

...are both eternal. God is limited in power and perhaps in knowledge, but not in quality of character.

God is doing the best he can with the recalcitrant world and will ultimately triumph completely over it. Man ought to assist God in this struggle and hasten the complete overthrow of evil.

God is considered as growing and as finite.”

Unfortunately, even Christians fall into the trap of this kind of thinking, primarily because we have ignored the teaching about the sovereignty of God. There is a form of dualism in the universe and it is a struggle between good and evil, but the sides are not even.

I will discuss more about God’s Sovereignty and His relationship with Satan in the last part of tonight’s message.

- **Pantheism**

Pantheism typically denies the transcendence as well as the personality of God and teaches that God is immanent in the Universe. In other words, God *is* the material universe.

“God is all; all is God.”

- **Deism**

Deism puts the emphasis on God’s transcendence to the neglect of His immanence. In other words, “God is present in creation only by his power, not in his very nature and being.”

God created the universe, then sat back to watch it run down like an old watch that never gets rewound or never has its battery replaced.

- **Polytheism**

Polytheism is the belief in many gods, typically resulting in idolatry.

- **Henotheism**

Henotheism is very similar to polytheism in that the adherent believes there are many gods in the universe, but they have singled out one of those gods as the focus of their worship.

Mormonism is henotheistic. They worship only one god – the god of this world. However, they also believe that the god of this world was once a man who earned the right to be a god and that every man has the potential to become a god.

Since there are an unknown or infinite number of planets in the Universe, then there is an unknown or an infinite number of gods.

- **Monotheism**

Monotheism is the belief that there is only one God.

I know you are finally relieved to find a category that fits your beliefs.

There are three major belief systems in the world that are monotheistic: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

Typical Misconceptions about God

Many years ago, J. B. Phillips wrote a book entitled *Your God Is Too Small*.

The premise of the book is that, even with those who were raised in the church and in an evangelical setting have a very limited concept of God, both in knowledge and in application.

In the words of J.B. Phillips, many people in the world see God as a “hot house god who could only exist between the pages of the Bible or inside the four walls of a Church.”

In other words, we have made God our own and have defined Him in terms with which we are comfortable.

As a result, the world sees our God as one who exists only in myths and in the apparently secret society of the church fellowship. Certainly ours is not a God who can cope with the affairs of a modern-day world. What does God know about computers and space travel and the everyday struggles of a contemporary society?

It is no wonder, then, that when a tragedy strikes, people ask, “Where was God?” Even members of the Christian community ask that question and doubt whether God really cares or even knows about their lives.

J. B. Phillips

Many men and women today are living, often with inner dissatisfaction, without any faith in God at all. This is not because they are particularly wicked or selfish or, as the old-fashioned would say, “godless,” but because they have not found with their adult minds a God big enough to “account for” life, big enough to “fit in with” the new scientific age, big enough to command their highest admiration and respect, and consequently their willing co-operation.

There are many misconceptions of what God is really like with the result that our Christianity is powerless and our testimony ineffective, even in our families and the lives of our children.

First of all, many depend on their **consciences** to be the voice of God, yet such a practice is fraught with danger and with deception. The conscience can be controlled by the will or ignored by the mind to the point that it is ineffective in directing anyone’s life to the perfection that God calls us.

For those who are sensitive in their spirit and prone to yield to guilt at the slightest hint of impropriety, the conscience can be “an over exacting tyrant.”

To those who are insensitive – who by habit have ignored the compelling spirit of right-living within them, the conscience becomes “a comfortable accommodating ‘Voice Within’ which would never interfere with a man’s pleasure.”

Secondly, some understand the person of God based on the concept of **father**, but the father that they have in mind is not that of the Father of Christ, but the experience of life with their own earthly father.

How many of us had perfect fathers who were always available to be there when we needed them most, who took the assignment of making disciples seriously, who loved us unconditionally? How many were apathetic at best and tyrannical at worst? Or not even present?

When I taught middle school, I remember a demographic of the students in our school that indicated that over 65% of the students lived in single-parent homes – and typically that single parent was a mother.

I read a statistic recently that said that over 60% of the births in America are to unmarried women. So the father’s function is only utilitarian and his faithfulness is non-existent because he is either unknown or nowhere to be found.

Thirdly, others see God as the “**old man in the sky**.”

That is not difficult to understand when you think of the way we talk to our children about God.

We teach them that they must respect their elders. We also teach them that they must respect God above everyone and everything else. So God must be the oldest of the elders.

A child soon realizes that the older they get, the more they learn. Since God knows everything, then He must be infinitely old.

We put a lot of emphasis on going to heaven to be with God and often neglect to teach our children that God is everywhere – that He is immanent in the creation.

We may not teach this consciously, but we live it unconsciously since we spend so much of our time trying to solve life’s problems instead of spending time with our children praying to God for answers to those problems. So God becomes someone who is far removed and distant from reality.

These and many other concepts of God have crept in unawares into our homes and even our churches. We do not have a clear concept of biblical doctrines because we do not have a clear concept of the God who created us.

If we get it wrong about God, then we will get it wrong about everything else.

The Tri-Unity of God

We do not have time within the confines of this to teach this point with any depth. Yet no study of God would be complete that did not call attention to the fact that God is a trinity – He is One God yet three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Two concepts that cause the world to reject Christianity is our claim of the exclusivity of salvation in Christ alone and the concept of the Trinity.

The intellectual mind of man reasons that there can never be anything that is at once one and three. It is not a logical, mathematical, reasonable thought, therefore it is foolishness. To say that one plus one plus one equals one defies everything that is reasonable within man's knowledge.

Yet the reason we have such a difficult time accepting the fact of the Trinity is that we tend to think of God in physical and material terms – as a supernatural being – a being that is just a much larger version of man.

Men tend to think in terms of dimensions – time, space, and matter – and the limitations that accompany them. But therein lies the problem – we think in terms of limits instead of eternity. The reason is that we understand, at least in concept, the idea of time, space, and matter, but we have nothing to which we can make an analogy when it comes to eternity.

Islam rejects the concept of a trinity because they believe that all of God is contained in the person of Allah. He is without equal in the Universe and therefore could have no counterpart. Their minds will not allow them to see past the limits of time, space, and matter.

Mormonism does not believe in a Trinity because the god they serve was once a man. He was conceived through sexual intercourse as any other man and actually lives on a planet somewhere in space.

The trinity is three separate Gods: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
"That these three are separate individuals, physically distinct from each other, is demonstrated by the accepted records of divine dealings with man," (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 35).

Jehovah's Witnesses quote 1 Cor. 14.33 that says, "God is not the author of confusion." The concept of the Trinity is confusing. Therefore, it cannot be true. What they have done is something they are very good at – they have taken a verse out of context and made it say what they want it to say. The word "confusion" does not make any reference to the mind, to thinking, or to understanding. The word refers to commotion, instability, disorder, and disturbance. It is a word related to behavior, not understanding.

One could ask why the concept of three-in-one is so confusing since we see it in existence all of the time.

Reality: Matter, Space, Time

| | |
|----------|---|
| Matter: | Energy, Matter, Phenomena or Motion |
| Space: | Length, Width, Height |
| Time: | Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow or Past, Present, Future |
| Mankind: | Body, Soul, Spirit or Mind, Emotion, Will |

The Bible teaches very clearly that there are three persons who make up the godhead. The idea of the Trinity is beyond our ability to comprehend or explain, but to deny that it is true is to deny the fundamental teachings of Scripture.

It is simply a mystery of God. Just to touch on a few points related to the Trinity:

1. First of all, the Bible teaches that God is one.

God does not consist of parts. He is one – a unity.

Deut. 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Mark 12:29 Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’”

1 Tim. 2:5 For there is one God...

2. Several times the Bible refers to God with a plural pronoun:

Gen. 1.26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Gen. 11.7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.

Isaiah 6.8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

3. The Bible teaches very clearly that Jesus is God.

- He is called by the same divine names as God: the first and the last, Alpha and Omega, Holy One, Lord Savior
- He has the same divine attributes as the Father: omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternal, infinite, righteous
- He is assigned the same divine offices as the Father: creator, preserver, judge, forgiver of sin

- He receives the same divine adoration as does the Father: prayer and worship.

Plus, the Bible specifically refers to Jesus as God:

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

NIV: No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

Rom. 9:5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, for ever praised! Amen. (NIV)

NLT: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. And he is God, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

1 John 5:20 We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true – even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

4. The Bible also teaches that the Holy Spirit is God.

- He bears the divine attributes of God: eternal omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, holy
- He shares in the divine works of God: creation, giving of life, inspiring Scripture, working miracles, involved in redemption
- He bears the divine names of God: equated with Jehovah

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is directly referred to as God in the Bible.

Acts 5:3 Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

Compare the following sets of Scriptures which equate the Holy Spirit with God:

1 Cor. 3:16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

1 Cor. 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

Rom. 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

2 Cor. 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

1 Cor. 2:10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Rom. 8:27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

(For more information on the Trinity, see the chart that accompanies these notes.)

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PART 3: PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES of God

When we think about the attributes of God, we must realize that we can never fully fathom the depths of the knowledge of God. All that we know about Him is what He has chosen to reveal to us.

There are many attributes of God and every list you might reference will include some attributes that others do not. Our study will not be exhaustive simply because we do not have the time, but we will cover as much of the subject as possible in the time allotted.

Most people divide the attributes of God into two major categories:

- God's Personal Attributes
- God's Moral Attributes

I. God's Personal Attributes – God as a Rational Spirit

A. Attributes of God's Person

1. Spirit

John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

2 Cor. 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2. Invisible

1 Tim. 1:17 To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Col. 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

3. Immaterial (does not mean insignificant or unimportant, but without a physical body – in contrast to Mormonism which teaches that God has a material body and was once a man)

Luke 24:39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.

Deut. 4:12 Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice.

John 5:37 And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen,

1 Tim. 6:16 who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.

Because God is an invisible spirit, we can know Him apart from our senses. We are also spiritual beings, and our spirit can know His spirit. Our knowing Him is not restricted to physical experiences or locations.

Since God is immaterial, we are delivered from bondage to material things.

Yet, when we say God is invisible and immaterial, several questions come to mind:

- 1) We all can remember times when the Bible speaks of men having seen God.
 - While on Mt. Sinai Moses asked God, "Show me thy glory. And (God) said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee...and he said, Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live...and thou shalt see my back: but my face shall not be seen" (Ex. 33:18-23).
 - When God spoke to Moses "face to face" He spoke as "a man unto his friend," i.e., familiarly (Ex. 33:11).
 - Moses, Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel "saw the God of Israel" (Ex.24:9-11)
 - Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, seated on His throne. (6:1-5)
 - Daniel saw a similar vision of God (Dan. 7:9-10)

There is no doubt that these men saw a manifestation of God in physical form of some sort, known as a theophany, but none of them ever saw God in all of His glory and majesty. They could not have survived doing so.

- 2) Another question related to the concept that God has no material body deals with the numerous references in Scripture to such physical forms.
 - Isaiah 59.1 hand, ear
 - 1 Chron. 19.9 eye
 - Matt. 4.4 mouth
 - Ex. 33.18-23 back, face
 - Ex. 24.9-10 feet

These are all referred to as anthropomorphisms – a huge word that simply means that God referred to himself in terms that men could comprehend.

Since no man has ever seen God, then our understanding of what He looks like is naturally limited to what we are told in the Bible.

There is no clear understanding of what God might look like, yet God is not some formless blob – He has some form, whatever that may be. So how, then, is God able to be everywhere at the same time?

- 1) First of all, remember that God is not limited by time, space, or matter so that He does not operate under the same laws of physics that limit us to being in one place at a time.
- 2) Secondly, in Psalm 139:7 (which we will read again in a moment when we talk about God's omnipresence) David asks, "Where shall I go from your Spirit?"

So that God is everywhere within the creation because His Spirit, which is part of the unity of the Trinity, is capable of being everywhere at the same time.

Whatever the case may be about God's shape or form, He is spirit, He is invisible, He is immaterial, and He is...

4. Living (30x)

The phrase "the living God" is used over thirty times in the Old and New Testaments.

Joshua 3:10 And Joshua said, "Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you..."

Psalm 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

Jer. 10:10 But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King.

Matt. 16:16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

5. Personal

I have given you a list of the personality characteristics of God with scripture references that apply these characteristics to God.

The Bible says that...

- God is a jealous God.
- He gets angry, even though He is slow to anger.
- God is love.

- He has a mind, and He thinks and reasons.
- God is patient and longsuffering, forgiving, and comforting.

A list of the personality characteristics of God:

| Characteristic | Biblical Support |
|----------------|---|
| Jealous | Deut. 4.24; 6.15; Nahum 1.2; Ex. 34.14 |
| Anger | Ps. 7:11 |
| Love | 1 John 4.8, 16 |
| Will | Mark 3:35; Acts 13.36; 2 Tim. 1.1 |
| Thinks | Isaiah 55.8-9; Psalm 139.17; 40.5; Job 13.3 |
| Mind | Romans 11.34; 1 Cor. 2.16 |
| Long-suffering | Ex. 34.6; Numbers 14.18; Psalm 86.15 |
| Patient | Romans 15.5; 2 Peter 3.9 |
| Kind | Psalm 26.3; 36.7; 63.3; Jeremiah 9.24 |
| Forgiving | Eph. 4.32 |
| Comforting | 2 Cor. 1.3,4; 2 Cor. 7.6 |

God has all of the characteristics that are required of a being that has personality: mind, knowledge, and will. And because God is personal, then we can know Him on a personal basis.

Richard Strauss tells how a...

... British Columbia Appeals Court has ruled God to be a nonperson. A suspect was observed by hidden camera praying, and in his prayer he admitted that he was guilty. The court ruled that privileged communication, which would be inadmissible in court, must take place between two people, but that since God is not a person, comments made to Him are considered to be admissible evidence.

The judges who rendered that decision would seem to be rather unfamiliar with God's revelation of Himself.

6. Unique

Not only is God one – He is one of a kind.

Ex 15:11 Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

Deut. 4:35 ...the LORD is God; there is no other besides him.

Isaiah 43:10 Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.

Isaiah 44:6 Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. 8 Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any.

Mark 10:18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."

1 Sam. 2.2; Isaiah 45.5,18,22; 1 Cor. 8.4-6; 1 Tim. 2.5

B. Attribute's of God's Being

1. Eternal/Everlasting – without beginning or ending

Genesis 21:33 And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

Psalms 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

Isa. 40:28 The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

1 Timothy 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

2. Infinite – exists outside of time and space with no limitations whatsoever.

a. Omniscient

Psalms 139.1 O LORD, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

Job 37:16 (The Lord) is perfect in knowledge,

Ps. 147:5 ...his understanding is beyond measure.

b. Omnipresent

Jer. 23:24 Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.

Psalm 139:7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! 9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

1 Kings 8:27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!

c. Omnipotent

Rev. 19:6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

Some translations say "the Lord God Almighty" because that is what the word means. God is all powerful. He is God Almighty.

Job 42:2 I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

Gen 18:14 Is anything too hard for the LORD?

Jer. 32:17 Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who has made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

Matt. 19:26 Jesus said, "...with God all things are possible."

3. Immortal – meaning that God cannot be defeated and cannot die.

1 Tim. 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Tim. 6:16 (God) alone has immortality...

4. Immutable – God cannot change. To change would mean that God got either better or worse, but God is perfect and therefore cannot change.

Mal. 3:6 For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Heb. 6:17 ...when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

THE PURSUIT of God

PART 4: MORAL ATTRIBUTES of God

II. God's Moral Attributes – God as a Righteous Spirit

A. Holy – the essential moral characteristic of God

Ps 99:9 ...the LORD our God is holy!

1 Sam. 2:2 There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.

Isa 57:15 tells us that God's very name is Holy.

Isaiah 6:3 And one (seraphim) called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

Some have said that repeating the word "holy" three times calls attention to the Trinity. It is certain that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all holy.

Yet it is more likely that God's holiness is three times repeated for the purpose of declaring His holiness to be absolute and perfectly true.

1 Peter 1:15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

God's holiness stands out in stark relief when seen against the dark background of sin. Because of His holiness, God cannot tolerate sin in any form or in any place.

Psalms 5:4 You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; no evil dwells with you.

Sin is so abhorrent to God that it extends even to the person who persists in it – who refuses to repent and accept the mercy God offers.

Psalms 5:5 The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all who do iniquity.

Psalms 11:5 The LORD examines both the righteous and the wicked. He hates those who love violence.

Prov. 6:16 There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, 19 a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

God is holy and righteous and as a result, He cannot tolerate the sin or the rebellious sinner.

While it is true that God is love and full of mercy and grace, He is equally filled with righteousness and Justice.

The two terms “holy” and “righteous” are very similar in meaning.

Holiness is an inward character of God and because He is holy, He is also righteous and just in His outward dealings with man.

B. Righteous/Just

In the Bible, these two words are representative of a single Hebrew word and a single Greek word. In other words, to be righteous is also to be just.

Ezra 9:15 O LORD, God of Israel, you are righteous!

Psalms 116:5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous...

Psalms 119:142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness...

Psalms 145:17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.

John 17:25 O righteous Father...

One commentator wrote that the righteousness of God “is that attribute that leads Him always to do right.”

Yet I believe that a better definition is “that attribute which defines as right that which God does.”

God cannot sin and therefore cannot choose to do what is wrong. He does not have to make a choice between right and wrong because He is sovereign over all and determines within Himself what is right and wrong.

Deut. 32:4 (He is) a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

C. Wrathful

God’s attributes of wrath and jealousy are directly related to His attributes of holiness and righteousness.

We have seen that God abhors not only the sin, but also the sinner who rejects His gracious hand of mercy and persists in the practice of sin and rebellion.

Many people – including many Christians – see God’s wrath as well as God’s anger as contradictions of God’s love and mercy and either ignore it, or feel the need to apologize or excuse it somehow.

Per A.W. Pink, there are more references in the Bible to God’s wrath, anger, and fury than to His love and tenderness.

God’s wrath is as much an attribute of God as is His love and grace and mercy.

- ***God's wrath in the Old Testament:***

Ex. 34:6 The LORD passed before him (Moses on Mt. Sinai) and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."

Up to this point, this is the God we love to know and to talk about, but God continues...

...but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

God does not punish the third and fourth generations for the sins of the fathers, but His wrath is so strong against the fathers that it is generations before the effect of His wrath is dissipated.

God's wrath is His response to rebellion.

Deut. 9:7 Remember and do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD.

It is His response to idolatry.

2 Chron. 24:18 And they abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs.

God must be provoked and driven before He releases His wrath.

2 Chron. 36:16 ...they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy.

Ezra 5:12 ...after our fathers had provoked the God of heaven to wrath (by their idolatry and rebellion), He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house and carried the people away into Babylon.

Many people feel that the wrath of God is an OT feature of God that no longer applies under the covenant of the NT.

- ***God's wrath in the New Testament:***

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Rom. 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

The NT refers to the wrath of God ten times, including the last time it is referenced in the Book of the Revelation talking about Christ Jesus coming in judgment...

Rev. 19:15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

D. Jealous

The Bible makes ten references to God's jealousy.

Deut. 4:24 ...the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

There is a direct connection between God's wrath and His attribute of jealousy.

Nahum 1:2 The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.

It is such an integral part of who God is that it is even included in the Ten Commandments.

Ex 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Jealousy in the manner in which God applies it is not a sin, but a response to the unfailing love He has for His people.

(Contrast the meaning of jealousy vis a vis envy.)

Ezekiel 39:25 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name.

There is nothing sinful in protecting those you love. The greater the love, the greater the jealousy. Since God loves us perfectly, then His jealousy for His children is strong and anyone or anything that threatens their security and their souls immediately incites Him to wrath.

God's is jealous for those that He loves.

E. The Rock

Deut. 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Deut. 32:18 You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.

1 Sam. 2:2 There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.

2 Sam. 22:2 He said, "The LORD is my Rock and my fortress and my deliverer, 3 my God, my Rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my Savior; you save me from violence.

2 Sam. 22:32 For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a Rock, except our God?... 47 The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be my God, the rock of my salvation,

2 Sam. 23:3 The God of Israel has spoken; the Rock of Israel has spoken to me...

Psalms 18:2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold... 31 For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?... 46 The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation...

Other references to God as our Rock in Psalms:

Psalms 28:1; 31:2,3; 42:9; 62:2, 6, 7; 71:3; 78:35; 89:26; 92:15; 94:22; 95:1

One of the more common phrases used several times is that God, the Almighty, is the Rock of our salvation. And since all of these references are in the OT, there is no doubt that they are making reference only to the Father.

But is that correct? Or is there more to this concept of God as the rock?

1 Cor. 10:1 I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

F. Wise

Meaning: forming the best plans and using the best means for carrying them out.

Rom. 16:27 to the only wise God be glory for ever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

1 Tim. 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Jude 1:25 To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

G. Truthful

2 Sam. 7:28 And now, O Lord GOD, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant.

Numbers 23:19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind.

1 Sam. 15:29 ...the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.

Heb. 6:18 ...it is impossible for God to lie...

Titus 1:1 Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, 2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

John 3:33 Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true.

Romans 3:4 ...let God be found true, though every man be found a liar...

John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

H. Good

1 Chron. 16:34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endures forever.

This was a favorite song of Israel. They sang it again upon the completion of the Temple.

They sang it in Ezra 3:11 after they were allowed to return to Jerusalem from the captivity in Babylon and laid the foundation for the new Temple.

Jeremiah tells us in Jer. 33:11 that this same song of the goodness of God will be sung during the celebrations after Israel is restored in the last days.

Jer. 31:14 And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, says the LORD.

Hosea 3:5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

Psalm 25: 7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to your mercy remember me for the sake of your goodness, O LORD. 8 Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

Psalm 107:8 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Psalm 27:13; 33:5; 52:1; 68:10; 69:16; 86:5; 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1; 118:29; 135:3; 136:1; 143:10; 145:9

Ex. 33:19 (God said to Moses), "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

Nahum 1:7 The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knows them that trust in him.

Mark 10:18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

Romans 2:4 ...do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

I. Merciful/Lovingkindness

These words are represented by the same word in Hebrew.

Psalm 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Deut. 4:31 For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.

Isa. 63:7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he has bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

In NT Greek, the same word is translated as mercy, compassion, and kindness, especially toward sinfulness and suffering.

God is absolutely sovereign in directing His mercy and compassion toward whomever He will.

Rom. 9:15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

In other words, His mercy cannot be demanded or coerced. It may be sought after, but whether to grant it is totally within the scope of His will.

J. Faithful

The meaning of the OT word faithful was “to prop or to support.” It referred to one who may be safely leaned upon.

Deut. 33:27 The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Deut. 32:4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

In the NT, the Greek word for faithfulness meant “trustworthy,” and referred to one who could be relied on.

1 Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor. 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

2 Thess. 3:3 ...the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

K. Long-suffering/Patient

Meaning: to be mild and slow in avenging; to be slow to anger and slow to punish

Num. 14:18 The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression...

Psalms 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

God's mercy and long-suffering are intended for all mankind.

2 Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

1 Tim. 2:4 (God) wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Earlier the Bible said in Romans 2:4, "...the goodness of God leads you to repentance." Now we read in...

2 Peter 3:15 ...consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation...

Lam. 3:22 It is because the LORD is merciful that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness.

1 Tim. 1:15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

God's longsuffering and patience is "a power in God that enables him to endure everything that is necessary to accomplish all that he has planned." (Reisinger)

Of course, God has no reason to lose patience and forget to be longsuffering. Everything that He has decreed will come to pass in the fullness of time and nothing man can do or fail to do will prevent His will from being done.

That's why Peter said, "The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." Everyone who can be saved will be saved and everyone who is saved will be saved for eternity.

L. Loving

1 John 4:8 God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Love is not just a characteristic of God; love is the very essence of God.

There is no defining or knowing God apart from His love.

If you were to ask any person the primary attribute of God, the one word that defines Him above all others – it would be that God is love.

But how does man know to answer this way? There is no way that any man would ever have come to such an understanding of God from nature or out of his own intellect.

The only way that man has any idea of the concept of God as love finds its source uniquely in the Bible.

Every tribe of man has known of some kind of god, but they are almost without fail gods of vengeance who require continuous appeasement by works and worship and sacrifice. Many times the requirement is human sacrifice, and too many times that sacrifice is a child or a young person.

Most of the radical Muslims who are strapping bombs to themselves and committing suicide are young people who have been convinced by older people (who will not wear the bombs!) that by killing themselves, they will give the greatest glory and satisfaction to Allah and thus achieve the highest levels of heaven.

God, our Creator, is a God of love – a fact that can only be comprehended by coming to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Matt Redman song...

This is how we know, this is how we know what love is

Just one look at your cross.

1 John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.

Whom does God love?

- God loves the Son.

Matt. 3:17 God said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

- God loves those who love the Son.

John 16:27 ...the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

John 14:21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

The Bible clearly teaches that God has a general love for all mankind prior to their coming to acknowledge Christ as Lord.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 Tim. 2:4 (God) desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Rom. 5:6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Eph. 2:4 God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved...

But God has a peculiar love – a special love – reserved for those who become part of the kingdom – those who are the “beloved of God.”

John 17:22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Zeph. 3:17 The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.

1 John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

Rom. 8.29-39

God's love for His children is limitless...

Psalm 103:11 ...as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

Eph. 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

...eternal...

Psalm 136:1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.

...and immutable or unchanging.

Micah 7:18 He does not retain his anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love.

What is the greatest evidence for the love of God?

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son...

God's love is proven by the fact that He gave. In fact, there is no such thing as love until it is given away. The very definition of love is giving.

What other God is like our god?

➤ Is Allah?

Allah is a single deity with no known companions. Before the creation of the world, He was alone – no family, no community. To whom did He relate? To whom could He share affection? To whom could He give?

Allah could not love because there was no object of love even if it were one of His attributes.

Did Allah create the world because He needed to be able to give? If so, then Allah is contingent or dependent upon His creation to be fulfilled.

The result of such an existence is total unity with no room for diversity. Thus, those who follow Allah are completely intolerant of the existence of those who reject Him.

➤ At the other extreme there is Hinduism.

In Hinduism, there are over one million named gods and goddesses.

There is no social unity among them nor among those who follow the teachings of Hinduism.

The entire culture of Hinduism is based on a caste system that is defined by separation, division, and class warfare.

Hinduism demands from its subjects works worthy of righteousness. There is no room for grace and mercy.

The gods of Hinduism know nothing about giving – only taking. Hinduism, then, is all about diversity and knows nothing of unity.

➤ Then we have the God of Christianity

God is a Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – one and at the same time three.

For God to have the attribute of love, there must have been an object of His love from eternity. And, of course, there was – the Son has always been there with the Father.

There was perfect love and community before the creation of the world between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

They are diverse yet unified in thought and purpose and action with the power to give and to receive.

And God instilled these very characteristics into His creation in the person of man created in God's own image.

1 John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers.

God's love is measured by His limitless grace; it is tempered by His righteousness and justice.

THE PURSUIT of God

PART 5: SOVEREIGNTY of God

In this final section, I want to talk about a characteristic of God that in reality is not an attribute of God, but a summation of all of His attributes.

We have learned that God is...

- Omniscient – He knows all things
- Omnipresent – He is everywhere, both outside and inside of the creation
- Omnipotent – He is all powerful
- Eternal – No beginning and no end
- Infinite – not limited by time, space, matter, Law, or anything else other than His own nature. For example, God cannot die, and He cannot lie.

God is independent, self-existent, and self sufficient.

All of these attributes hinge on the fact that God is sovereign.

That word, for some reason, conjures up

- feelings of great adoration and praise causing one to fall on their face before the Lord in worship, or
- it conjures up feelings of anger or at least a defensiveness in those who struggle to accept and/or comprehend God's perfect sovereignty.

Let's begin with a definition of the word.

World English Dictionary:

supreme and unrestricted power

Legal Dictionary:

supreme power; freedom from external control

Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary:

God's absolute right to do all things according to His own good pleasure

God's sovereignty refers to the fact that God is the supreme ruler and authority over all of the earth and the kingdoms of the earth. He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

He ordains everything that comes to pass, and He makes certain that everything He decrees comes to pass in the fullness of time.

Once a person begins to fathom the richness and the depth of the sovereignty of God, then the only thing left for them to do is to join the psalmist...

Psalm 8:4 What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

"It is not merely that God has the power and right to govern all things but that He does so always and without exception." - John Piper

Numbers 23:19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

Job 23:13 God is unchangeable, and who can turn him back? What he desires, that he does.

Psalm 103:19 The Lord has established His throne in the heavens; and His *sovereignty* rules over all.

Isaiah 46:9-11 Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose, 11 calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it."

Dan. 2:20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might...22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

One of the greatest testimonies to the sovereignty of God in Scripture is given, not by the patriarchs of Israel, not by the prophets, nor the apostles, but by a pagan king named Nebuchadnezzar.

Dan. 4:34 At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; 35 all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Acts 4:25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth take their

stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.” 27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

1 Tim. 6:15 (God the Father) is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

- **God is sovereign over all things**

Psalm 47:2 For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth.

Psalm 103:19 The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.

Psalm 9:7 But the LORD sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice.

Psalm 115:3 Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

Psalm 135:6 Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.

Isaiah 46:8 Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, 9 remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.”

Eph. 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

- **God is sovereign over creation**

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Psalm 135:6 Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. 7 He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses.

Isa. 44:24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: “I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself.”

Matt. 5:45 God makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Rev. 4:11 Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

- **God is sovereign over the physical Universe**

Psalm 147:4 He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.

Isa. 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.

Joshua 10:12-14 Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." 13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. 14 And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

- **God is sovereign over animals:**

Psalms 104:21 The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. 22 When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens. 23 Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening. 24 O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. 25 Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. 26 There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it. 27 These all look to you, to give them their food in due season. 28 When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. 29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

1 Kings 17:4 You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there. 5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

Jonah 1:17 The LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 4:6 Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered.

- **God is sovereign over angels & Satan**

First of all, God is sovereign over the angels.

Psalms 103:20 Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!

We know of story after story how the angels carried out the mission of God to protect God's people and to deliver messages to men on behalf of God.

But we need to recognize that God is also sovereign over Satan – who, by the way, is only a single angel, now fallen. He can do no more than other angels can do, and he, too, is limited to and subject to the control of God.

When the subject of God's sovereignty comes up, one of the questions that is asked is "If God created all things and is in charge of all things, then did God create sin and evil?"

The straight answer to that question is no.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

Yet in some way, God, who knows all things even before they happen, knew that sin and evil would enter into the picture. Yet He also knew that it was worth the risk in order to see His plans completed.

God created Lucifer. And He created him knowing that he would become Satan. Somehow, all of that is part of God's plan. I don't think there is any need for us to try to understand it. It is what it is and faith says that we accept it for what it is.

But we do need to realize that God is sovereign in His creation. Satan is not out of control. If he were, then there would be things that he could control and over which he had authority that God could not.

Then God would neither be omnipotent nor sovereign.

God could destroy Satan at any time, but He does not, apparently because Satan is part of a much larger plan than either Satan or man can comprehend and which God has not seen fit to make known in its entirety.

If we or Satan knew all the things that God has in store for the Creation, then we would be omniscient and so we would be God.

In 2 Cor. 4:4, the Bible says that Satan is "the god of this world." In 1 John 5:19 we learn that "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." Yet we are given assurance that even with all that, Satan can only operate within the sovereign will of God.

Job 1:12 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Job 2:6 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life."

In answer to a debate among the disciples about who would be greatest in the kingdom, Jesus said to Peter...

Luke 22:31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,

What is implied in this is that God granted the request of Satan and allowed him to test Peter as he had tested Job. But Jesus went on in the next verse...

Luke 22:32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

Mark 1:27 He (Christ, who is God) commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.

1 Sam. 16:14 The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him. 15 And Saul's servants said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you."

Judges 9:23 Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech:

Judges 9:23 God sent a spirit that stirred up trouble between Abimelech and the leading citizens of Shechem, and they revolted. (NLT)

1 John 5:18 We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

1 Cor. 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

- **God is sovereign over nations**

Daniel 2:21 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

Daniel 4:17 The Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.

1 Sam. 2:7 The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. 8 He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world.

Luke 1:51 He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; 52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

Psalms 2:2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. 3 "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." 4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

Psalm 33:10 The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. 11 But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Psalm 47:7 For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm! 8 God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne. 9 The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted!

Job 34:24 He shatters the mighty without investigation and sets others in their place.

Jer. 27:5 It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me.

Isaiah prophesied that God chose Cyrus to be the ruler of the Persians and to make it possible for Israel to return to Jerusalem 150 years before Cyrus came to the throne. Not only did he prophesy concerning Cyrus, but he did so by name.

Isaiah 44:28 God says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'

Isaiah 45:1 Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:

Prov. 8:15 By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; 16 by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly.

Acts 13:21 Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king...

Rom. 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

- **God is sovereign over human beings:**

1 Sam. 2:6 The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up. 7 The LORD sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts. 8 He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's; upon them he has set the world. 9 He will guard the feet of his saints, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness. It is not by strength that one prevails; 10 those who oppose the LORD will be shattered. He will thunder against them from heaven; the LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.

Jer. 1:4 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Isa. 49:1 Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.

Rom. 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

2 Tim. 2:19 God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his."

Gal. 1:15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone;

- **God is sovereign over the affairs of man:**

Gen. 18:14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

Ex. 4:10 But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue." 11 Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"

Jer. 1:6 Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." 9 Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

Ezekiel 3:26 And I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be mute and unable to reprove them, for they are a rebellious house. 27 But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD." He who will hear, let him hear; and he who will refuse to hear, let him refuse, for they are a rebellious house.

Amos 3:6 Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does disaster come to a city, unless the LORD has done it?

John 9:1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."

Isa. 30:26 The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted.

Hosea 6:1 Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds.

Heb. 9:27 ...it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

APPENDIX

One of the most controversial subjects in the evangelical church is the doctrine of election, or God's sovereignty in salvation. This is a question that has been debated since at least the Middle Ages and the Reformation period without any clear and generally accepted resolution.

It is one of those subjects whose solution God left as a mystery. For some reason, He retained pieces of the puzzle that would have allowed us perfect understanding. But God knew things would operate better if we were required to live by faith in His wisdom and dependence on His sovereign will.

While this is a study that lends itself more to a study of salvation, it is included along with this study guide simply to provide a resource for further study by anyone who wishes to pursue it.

God's sovereignty over the salvation of man

John 6:44 "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. 65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father."

Matt. 11:27 No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this (that God had sent Paul to bring them salvation), they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Acts 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Rom. 9:16 So then it (salvation) depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

John 15:16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you."

Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

Deut. 7:6 You are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

2 Thess. 2:13 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1 Peter 1:20 Who (Jesus) verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Rom. 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Rev. 13:8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain.

God's sovereignty in salvation simply means that those who are saved are saved because God has chosen them for salvation. The Holy Spirit has given life to a dead spirit and understanding to a mind blinded by sin and by Satan. Those who are saved may be said to choose God, but only after God has first chosen them and enabled them to choose righteousness

Charles Spurgeon

If any man be saved, he is saved by divine grace and by divine grace alone; the reason of his salvation is not to be found in him, but in God. We are not saved as the result of anything that we do or that we will, but we will and do as the result of God's good pleasure and the work of His grace in our hearts. No sinner can prevent God; that is, he cannot go before Him, cannot anticipate Him. God is always first in the matter of salvation. He is before our convictions, before our desires, before our fears, and before our hopes. All that is good or ever will be good in us is preceded by the grace of God and is the effect of a divine cause within.

The Trinity Chart

by Matthew J. Slick

[The Trinity](#) | [The Deity of Jesus Christ](#) | [The Holy Spirit](#) | [The Trinity Chart](#)

God is a trinity of persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is not the same person as the Son; the Son is not the same person as the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is not the same person as Father. They are separate persons; yet, they are all the one God. They are in absolute perfect harmony consisting of one substance. They are coeternal, coequal, and copowerful. If any one of the three were removed, there would be no God.

There is, though, an apparent separation of some functions among the members of the Godhead. For example, the Father chooses who will be saved (Ephesians 1:4); the Son redeems them (Ephesians 1:7); and the Holy Spirit seals them (Ephesians 1:13).

A further point of clarification is that God is not one person, the Father, with Jesus as a creation and the Holy Spirit as a force (Jehovah's Witnesses). Neither is He one person who took three consecutive forms, i.e., the Father who became the Son who then became the Holy Spirit (United Pentecostal). Nor is the Trinity an office held by three separate Gods (Mormonism).

The chart below should help you to see how the doctrine of the Trinity is derived from Scripture. The list is not exhaustive, only illustrative. The first step is to establish how many Gods exist: one! Isaiah 43:10; 44:6; 45:14,18, 21, 22; 46:5,9.

"I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God" (Isaiah 45:5).

| | FATHER | SON | HOLY SPIRIT |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Called God | Philippians 1:2 | John 1:1,14; Colossians 2:9 | Acts 5:3-4 |
| Creator | Isaiah 64:8, 44:24 | John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17 | Job 33:4, 26:13 |
| Resurrects | 1 Thessalonians 1:10 | John 2:19, 10:17 | Romans 8:11 |
| Indwells | 2 Corinthians 6:16 | Colossians 1:27 | John 14:17 |
| Everywhere | 1 Kings 8:27 | Matthew 28:20 | Psalms 139:7-10 |
| All knowing | 1 John 3:20 | John 16:30 | 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 |
| Sanctifies | 1 Thessalonians 5:23 | Hebrews 2:11 | 1 Peter 1:2 |
| Life giver | Genesis 2:7 | John 1:3, 5:21 | 2 Corinthians 3:6, 8 |
| Fellowship | 1 John 1:3 | 1 Corinthians 1:9 | 2 Corinthians 13:14 |
| Eternal | Psalms 90:2 | Micah 5:1-2 | Romans 8:11 |
| A Will | Luke 22:42 | Luke 22:42 | 1 Corinthians 12:11 |
| Speaks | Matthew 3:17 | Luke 5:20, 7:48 | Acts 8:29, 11:12, 13:2 |
| Love | John 3:16 | Ephesians 5: 25 | Romans 15:30 |
| Searches the heart | Jeremiah 17:10 | Revelation 2:23 | 1 Corinthians 2:10 |
| We belong to | John 17:9 | John 17:6 | ... |
| Savior | 1 Timothy 1:1, 2:3, 4:10 | 2 Timothy 1:10; Titus 1:4, 3:6 | ... |
| We serve | Matthew 4:10 | Colossians 3:24 | ... |
| Believe in | John 14:1 | John 14:1 | ... |
| Gives joy | ... | John 15:11 | Romans 14:7 |
| Judges | John 8:50 | John 5:21, 30 | ... |

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